

# The Champion Community Approach

The Government of Madagascar is currently implementing a rapid and sustainable development policy that is in line with the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that aims at directly benefiting local communities. At the community level, innovative partnerships between the public and private sectors are being formed to carry out important efforts in community mobilization.

One example of a dynamic public-private partnership is the Champion Community approach which is used to mobilize community leaders, groups and individuals in a community that will lead to positive social, economic, and cultural development.

## ***The Champion Community Approach is a platform for all sectors of development***

The Champion Community Approach seeks to integrate four key development sectors to improve community well-being: 1) environmental protection, 2) health improvement, 3) economic development, and 4) good governance.

Development sectors are completely interdependent and need to be integrated to produce the best possible synergy while promoting rapid and sustainable development. The development of the rural economy, for example, is highly dependent on the availability and sound management of human and natural resources. In turn, the population needs to be healthy to be productive and natural resources rely on rational management to ensure availability and quality. At the same time, good governance in a community ensures commitment to and investment in natural resource management and health services.

The Champion Community Approach serves as a platform for the integration of these crucial development sectors. It calls for close collaboration between local and international partners and stakeholders to reach as many communities as possible throughout Madagascar.



### **a) Mobilizing all actors in the community**

Finding solutions to development challenges in a community requires the engagement of all key actors. The Champion Community Approach seeks to mobilize all community actors to achieve common goals and common objectives. An ACTOR is an individual or a group of individuals that voluntarily commits itself to carry out actions for achieving pre-defined objectives to become a Champion Community.

### ***Achieving common development objectives in the community***

Champion Community actions are defined through a participatory process which establishes development objectives and corresponding indicators, based on needs identified by the

community and on the analysis of data available at the community level. The set of objectives and indicators that serve as Champion Commune criteria are negotiated directly with the community by local partners. These must be specific, realistic, and achievable. The key is to define OBJECTIVES that require a significant but also reasonable level of effort from the community.

### ***Changing behaviors through Important-Doable-Actions***

The approach is based on important-doable-actions with tangible and measurable results which foster sustainable behavioral change. An ACTION is any form of participation by an individual or a group that facilitates, supports or promotes the achievement of the predefined objectives.

*A community becomes a Champion Community when it demonstrates that it has achieved the predefined objectives by implementing important, doable and measurable actions.*

### **Implementation cycle of the Champion Community Approach**

The approach is implemented through a 10-step cycle with a variable timeframe based on the development sector:

- Step 1: Introduction of the approach in the community and definition of the indicators and objectives
- Step 2: Signature of the commitment contract with the community
- Step 3: Training of community-based agents and launch of community-based activities
- Step 4: Monitoring of activities round 1
- Step 5: Supervision and technical/organizational support round 1
- Step 6: Monitoring of activities round 2
- Step 7: Supervision and technical/organizational support round 2
- Step 8: Monitoring of activities round 3
- Step 9: Evaluation of community performance against their predefined objectives
- Step 10: Festival to award Champion Community status and prize (if they meet their objectives)

### ***Champion Community's four-star system encourages multi-sectoral development***



At the end of this implementation cycle, the Community is awarded the Champion Community status if it has achieved the objectives in the development sectors targeted during the cycle. This earns it the status of "One-Star Champion Community." The community can then continue or expand its activities to a different sector, using the same approach to define objectives relative to the sector. Upon realizing these objectives, the community may continue its activities and earn stars from the remaining sectors, eventually becoming a "Four-Star Champion Community". Each star is given a specific color to

represent the corresponding development sector: green for environmental protection, blue for health improvement, gold for economic development, and white for good governance

### ***The Champion Community Approach tools***

Three toolkits are available to implementing partners for community-based activities:

- ***The Marketing kit:*** includes print materials that increase visibility of the approach in the community, to motivate community-based agents and to facilitate the approach's implementation.
- ***The Mass Media Communication kit:*** includes audio materials like songs, fables, sketches and promotional spots targeting local radio to support community mobilization and awareness-raising activities and to reinforce key messages.
- ***The Interpersonal Communication kit:*** includes materials to assist trainers and community-based agents to facilitate introductory activities, negotiate objectives with local communities, conduct training sessions, awareness-raising campaigns, behavior change communication activities and monitoring and evaluation activities.